

China's Maritime and Other Geographic Threats

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Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of this Subcommittee:

The People's Republic of China has active and/or dormant territorial disputes with practically all of its neighbors. China is today using paramilitary or military force to assert its territorial or economic zone claims against Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam and India. China also continues its more than two-decade long preparations for war against democratic Taiwan. Despite a relative peace that exists between them today, there is sufficient indication that China could in the future opt to pursue latent territorial claims against Russia, Mongolia and Korea. China's key goal in the pursuit of its claims is to improve its geostrategic position in order to strengthen the dictatorship of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). But as the Party's insecurity increases, it cannot be determined how much it will "externalize" its internal contradictions by pursuing aggression, which then further justifies internal repression.

Fundamental to the CCP's pursuit of its territorial goals has been the buildup and increasingly assertive employment of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and associated paramilitary forces, especially the newly reformed Chinese Coast Guard. China's use of military pressure in pursuit of its territorial claims is increasing the prospect for military clashes, especially with Japan and the Philippines. This testimony will largely focus on two concerns: 1) how China is building up and using its military forces to pursue its regional goals; and 2) how China is now building the framework for global military projection capabilities.

While China and the United States do not have direct territorial or resource disputes, Beijing's military buildup and intimidation of U.S. allies is intended to challenge Washington's ability to defend its allies, and thereby diminish the credibility of U.S. alliance commitments in East Asia. For most of the last year Japan has been in a near constant state of non-violent engagement with China's military and paramilitary forces over control of the Senkaku/Daiyou Islands, but the chances of a military incident are increasing. The Philippines is also being pushed by Chinese forces from areas in or near its Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ). While the U.S. has become more critical of China's aggressiveness, it maintains a strict neutrality toward conflicting maritime territorial claims in East Asia. This neutrality was more convenient when the U.S. had an excess of military superiority, which is now eroding as China builds up its military. The Obama Administration's "Rebalance" or "Pivot" of 2011 to 2013 has been welcome. However, the impact of sequestration and other budget cuts and pressures have damaged the credibility of Washington's ability to prevail in the ongoing arms race with China.

When Will China Be Satisfied ?

When examining the number of China's territorial conflicts with its neighbors, and especially the degree to which it is willing to undertake aggression against both powerful and weak neighbors, it is necessary to ask: at what point will the leadership of China be satisfied? China does not specify what level of control it desires over the South China Sea, the East China Sea or Taiwan. While "unification" or the conquest of Taiwan has long been called a "core interest," or an interest which China is willing to fight for, the term "core interest" has in recent years also been loosely applied to the South and East China Sea. China also has a policy of domestically cultivating resentment and of reaching back into history, when previous Chinese Emperors allegedly controlled areas far beyond present-day China, to justify current claims.

One ominous indicator from the deep well of nationalist sentiments in China is a list that has been posted and refined on Chinese web pages since at least 2008, called, "The Six Wars To Be Fought By China In the Coming 50 Years." Most recently it was posted in July 2013 on the web forum of the pro-Beijing and prominent Hong Kong newspaper *Wen Wei Po*, It includes:

1. The Unification of Taiwan (2020 to 2025)
2. "Reconquest" of the Spratly Islands (2035 to 2030)
3. "Reconquest" of Southern Tibet (2035 to 2040). Further goal of dismembering India.
4. "Reconquest" of Daiyou and Ryukyu Islands (2040 to 2045)
5. Unification of Outer Mongolia (2045 to 2050)
6. Taking back of lands lost to Russia (2055 to 2060)

This "Six Wars" list itself cannot be linked to any formal Chinese government policy or strategy. It is also somewhat assuring that on Chinese web pages, as many Chinese readers seem to condemn this list with horror as seem to support it. It may be tempting to dismiss this list as nationalist ranting. But it is also a fact that by means short of war, China is now trying to accomplish the first two, while the second two are being pursued partially.

Until July 2012 it could easily have been considered an extreme assessment to state that China would want to "reconquer" the Ryukyu Islands -- which China abandoned its claims to as part of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, after its defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War. In July 2012 PLA General Luo Yuan, known for voicing hard-line nationalist opinions, questioned Japan's sovereignty over the Ryukyus, and repeated this opinion to Chinese journalists in May 2013. Then on 9 May 2013 a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman rejected Japanese protests that China's state-controlled media would challenge Japan's sovereignty over the Ryukyus, but did not disavow that challenge. While it may not be possible today to determine the extent of China's future territorial ambitions, it is possible to assess the kind of military they are developing that could be employed to that end, how it is using its forces today to pursue territorial goals, how its neighbors are reacting, and what risks China's actions pose for the U.S..

Building Forces For Regional Dominance

Soon after the June 1989 Tiananmen Massacre, the Chinese Communist Party leadership quietly abandoned former paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's 1980s policy of putting military modernization at a 4th level of national priority and very likely raised to a top level of priority. The stellar U.S. performance during the 1990-1991 Gulf War against Iraq further confirmed this CCP decision. Today, after 20 years of sustained effort, it can be said that the People's Liberation Army has largely accomplished a transition to a 4th Generation level of technology and is quickly mastering the strategies, operational tactics, modern training regimens and logistic support capabilities to begin to formulate a 4th Generation level of operational capability. In East Asia today, the PLA has the dominant forces in space, the air, and very soon, the sea. While this combine of forces is often viewed as "Anti-Access" or "Area Denial" (A2AD) in purpose, China is also gathering regional force projection capabilities. When considering its access to civilian air and sealift, the PLA may have the ability to invade Taiwan early in the next decade and within the next two years, may be able to undertake a rapid amphibious assault against the Senkaku Islands.

Space, C4ISR, missile and regional nuclear forces form the vanguard of China's growing regional capabilities. China now has over 100 satellites in orbit and may soon exceed Russia's number. Nearly 20 optical and radar surveillance satellites, plus an eventual 30+ *Compass* navigation satellites will form the core space portion of a C4ISR (Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) system that connects "sensors" to "shooters" and allows the PLA to develop new "joint" operations. Ground elements include new Over-the-Horizon (OTH) radar, passive radar and other radar with counter-stealth capabilities. The PLA also operates effective electronic intelligence (ELINT) and signals intelligence (SIGINT) which also assist targeting.

These targeting systems are enabling precision missile and air strikes beyond 1,000km from China, such as by the PLA Second Artillery's much vaunted 1,700km range DF-21D Anti-ship Ballistic Missile (ASBM). Even though there have been no open source reports of a successful test against a moving target, this missile may be operational. After 2015 it may be supplemented by the ASBM version of a new 4,000km range intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM). The Mach 2-3 speed and 200km range YJ-12 anti-ship missile now arms PLA Naval Air Force (PLANAF) H-6G bombers, which can be cued by PLANAF Y-8J/Searchwater and KJ-200 radar aircraft.

Regional nuclear forces. China also maintains a sizable regional nuclear force. In 2012 retired Russian General Victor Esin, former chief of staff of the Russian Strategic Missile Forces, estimated that the PLA may have up to 700 tactical nuclear warheads for missiles and bombs. Esin estimates there may be as many as 150 tactical nuclear warheads allocated to short range ballistic missiles and land attack cruise missiles.

By 2020 the PLA Air Force (PLAAF) and PLANAF may have close to 1,000 4th Generation and 4+ Generation multirole fighters armed with advanced air-to-air missile and a range of precision guided munitions (PGMs). The 5th Generation Chengdu J-20 may enter service by 2020 and may soon be joined by other 5th Gen types. In 2013 the PLAAF and PLANAF began operating

medium altitude/medium endurance (MALE) unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), the latter conducting patrols near the Senkakus. The PLA is now developing strategic high-altitude/long-endurance (HALE) UAVs and is testing its first turbofan-powered unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAVs) — which eventually will equip future Chinese aircraft carriers.

At sea, the PLA Navy (PLAN) may have over 100 submarines due to their apparent retention of about 30 older Type 033 non-nuclear submarines for training and lesser missions such as mining and Special Operations troop transport. But its modern non-nuclear submarine complement includes about 20 Type 035 *Ming* class, 12 Russian-build *Kilos* armed with the effective Novator *Club* missile family, about 13 indigenous Type 039 *Song* class and 10-12 of the newest Type 039B *Yuan* class, with air independent propulsion (AIP) for longer periods submerged. About 20 *Yuans* are expected to be built. In 2010 the first Type 032 non-nuclear ballistic missile submarine was launched to test new strategic submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) but this class could be developed to carry ASBMs and multiple types of cruise missiles. The PLAN is expected to acquire about five Type 092 nuclear powered attack submarines (SSNs) before production of the 3rd Generation Type 095 begins.

The PLAN began its aircraft carrier era with the September 2012 commissioning of the *Liaoning*, which in three to four years may reach operational status with an air wing of 24 Shenyang J-15 carrier fighters which are about as effective as the Boeing F/A-18E/F. In the last decade the PLAN has acquired five new types of air-defense capable destroyers. The latest, Type 052D, features a 2nd Generation active phased array radar and launchers for 64 missiles, surface to air, anti-ship and anti-submarine. By 2020 the PLAN's complement of modern combat ships may include 25 destroyers, 40 frigates, 40 corvettes and 80 fast attack craft. While long a weakness, the PLAN's new ships will be increasingly capable of anti-submarine warfare (ASW), aided by new Y-8 based ASW patrol aircraft, powerful sonar array-towing catamaran ships and new bottom-moored sonar sensor networks.

Both formal amphibious and airlift capabilities are also increasing. The PLAN's three 25,000-30,000 ton Type 071 landing platform dock (LPD) amphibious assault ships may be joined by three more, and then by up to six 40,000 ton landing helicopter dock (LHD) assault ships. Existing amphibious lift of LPD and landing ship tank (LST) vessels could allow the PLA to transport about one division of troops and equipment. In May 2013 the PLAN took delivery of its first of four Ukrainian *Zubr* hovercraft, which can carry 500 troops each, or up to 150 tons of equipment, up to speeds of 40 knots. One or two prototypes of the Xian Y-20 heavylift transport are in testing. Eventually it will be able to carry about 65 tons of cargo, comparable to the U.S. C-17.

To exercise strategies short of war China has built up its maritime paramilitary forces. In early 2013 China completed the expected consolidation of seven maritime police and surveillance agencies to form the Chinese Coast Guard. In 2013 this service controls about 43 large patrol ships, but is now in the process of building about 56 more for an eventual total of about 100 ships. These ships are unarmed or lightly-armed, but sufficient for “presence” or “pushing” missions. Where it has none today, the Chinese Coast Guard will soon acquire a new long-range maritime patrol aircraft based on the twin-turboprop Xian MA60, with about a 10 hour endurance, increasing its ability to sustain an aerial presence in contested areas.

Pressuring Japan

China is using both paramilitary and military forces to pressure Japan into making territorial concessions—both in the maritime and air realms. Maritime territorial disputes include differences over their EEZ in the East China Sea, and who has sovereign control over the Senkaku/Daiyou Islands. China is also challenging Japan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) as too large for their region. For China, control or neutralization of the Senkakus would undermine the utility of the "First Island Chain" as a means to contain Chinese military power. It is thus ominous that in July 2012, and in May 2013, China's state controlled media allowed commentary that the Ryukyu Island chain, to include Okinawa, belongs to China, not Japan.

In a new book published on 22 October 2013, former Japanese Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko revealed his government secretly but vigorously sought to defuse a potential crisis with China over the Senkakus by preemptively purchasing the islands to prevent their purchase in an effort led by Tokyo Mayor Ishihara Shintaro. But China shut down secret negotiations and instead of averting a crisis, China used the purchase as an excuse to create one: a campaign of maritime intimidation against Japan that could facilitate a deliberate attack by Chinese forces or lead to an unintended military conflict with Japan.

Through most of 2013, Chinese Coast Guard ships have maintained a near-continuous presence around the 12 nautical mile territorial zone surrounding the Senkakus, and on several occasions (April 2013; 14 September; 27 September; 28 October) they have entered this zone. This has required the Japanese Coast Guard, which has about 121 large patrol ships, to maintain constant multi-ship patrols to meet Chinese incursions, resulting in a strain of Japanese resources. In early October, Japan's Ministry of Defense reported that Japanese Air Self Defense Force (ASDF) fighters had to scramble 149 times against Chinese aircraft in the six months from April to September 2013 – that is almost daily.

China's recent use of a PLANAF BZK-005 UAV, intercepted flying over the Senkakus on 9 September, has sparked a recent military escalation. Given their low cost, about \$1 million for a UAV the size of the BZK-005, China could soon inundate Japan's ADIZ with UAVs that might overwhelm the ASDF. On 20 October, Japanese reports indicated that current Prime Minister Abe Shinzo had approved a Defense Ministry plan for shooting down UAVs, which on 26 October a Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman said could be "an act of war." This statement also occurred during the PLAN's "Maneuver-5" exercises, which saw destroyers and frigates pass through the Miyako Strait, and then the PLAN dispatched Y-8J radar aircraft and H-6G bombers through the Miyako Strait, very likely to conduct coordinated combat exercises with PLAN ships.

When the PLAN's *Zubr* large hovercraft enter service, this will add to the temptation for China to strike the Senkakus, as they can carry thousands of troops or hundreds of tons of equipment to these islands in about 4 to 5 hours. An attack on the Senkakus may be quickly followed by attacks on the larger Sakashima Island group just to the south, which has ports and airfields and would better position the PLA to strike Taiwan from an Eastern axis.

Today, it is the ability of 24 Okinawa-based U.S. Marine MV-22 *Osprey* tilt rotor aircraft to put 500 troops or over 100 tons of equipment on these islands in about one hour that provides the margin of deterrence. In response, Japan is considering developing a short-range ballistic missile (SRBM), and is going to assemble its own 3,000 member “Marine” group with up to 20 MV-22s. Japan’s army and navy have started amphibious assault exercises with the U.S. Marines-Navy forces. Japan may also have to consider purchasing U.S. F-35B short take-off fighters to equip its larger LHDs or future aircraft carriers.

As there is little chance that Japan will surrender control of the Senkakus or other disputed areas, the optimal outcome may be a Japanese buildup of ISR, missile, fighter and Marine forces to pose an armed deterrent to China, essentially meeting China’s militarization of the East China Sea. However, such a buildup may also tempt China to strike before Japan completes its military force expansion.

Continued Preparation for War To Conquer Taiwan

Despite improving relations since the election of President Ma Ying Jeou in 2008, China has not abandoned its goal of controlling Taiwan. This ambition has not waned since Mao’s intended 1950 invasion was dissuaded by Josef Stalin, and is motivated by the CCP’s intolerance of any competing center of power in the Greater Chinese world -- a matter made more urgent by Taiwan’s evolution into an ideologically competitive democracy. While the early part of the previous administration of Chen Shui Bien was marked by Chinese military posturing and threats, recent years have seen an emphasis on political and economic warfare against Taiwan. But China’s military preparations to take Taiwan by force have not abated. Beijing would rather intimidate Taipei into “Peace Treaty” that opens the road to submission, but even such a strategy requires that its threats have credibility. And regardless of whether the Kuomintang (KMT) or the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) wins elections scheduled for 2016, China will be in far stronger position to apply coercive pressures if it so chooses.

In addition to ending a major ideological threat to the power position of the CCP, control of Taiwan would also yield spectacular military-strategic benefits. Taiwan sits in the middle of the “First Island Chain” and its immediate access to some of the deepest waters of the Pacific Ocean on its East Coast would be ideal for basing SSBNs. With military forces on Taiwan, the PLA could isolate Japan and South Korea from the Middle Eastern petroleum and sea lanes to global commerce which sustain their economies, forcing them to abandon their alliances with the United States.

In early October 2013, Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense (MND) issued a report estimating that the PLA could achieve “comprehensive military capability to successfully deter any foreign aid that comes to Taiwan's defense by 2020.” This statement was reported as meaning that Taiwan’s MND assesses that by 2020 the PLA will be able to deter any U.S. attempt to thwart a Chinese attack against Taiwan. The MND report also noted that the PLA is targeting Taiwan with 1,400 missiles. This number could include 400-500 land attack cruise missiles, new types of medium range ballistic missiles (MRBMs) like the DF-16 and the new DF-12 SRBM. The PLA Air Force today has more 4th Generation combat aircraft than does the Taiwan Air Force, and the growing PLA Navy submarine forces is more capable of seeking to blockade Taiwan.

However, from conversations with numerous Taiwanese military officials over the last five years, it is clear that their concern is shifting from threat of blockade to the threat of PLA invasion. The PLA maintains about 300,000 troops in the Taiwan Theater of Operations, but 500,000 may have some experience with amphibious operations. While PLAN formal amphibious lift may only be able to transport one division of troops, the PLA has access to growing lift in dual-use civil large and fast ferries. In 2006 Taiwan's MND estimated the PLA could mobilize 800 ships to transport 5 to 7 infantry divisions. One port, Dalian, may soon have ten new large 20,000 ton to 35,000 ton ferries which in combination could transport up to five armored brigades, including over 600 tanks. Chinese civil airlines, which are integrated into the PLAAF militia structure, could make about 120 large cargo aircraft (mainly Boeings) available for PLA use—about 4x the formal PLA Air Force heavy lift.

PLA ground forces include an estimated 7,000 to 14,000 Special Forces, three divisions of the 15th Airborne Corp (35,000 troops), and two brigades of PLA Navy Marines (12,000 troops), all of which could be used to capture strategic ports and airfields to enable access for follow-on forces. Future regiments of Y-20 transports will be able to lift new wheeled medium-weight armored vehicles, which can also be more easily transported by civilian ferries, and take advantage of Taiwan's excellent road network.

Taiwan's strategic response to China's continued military buildup has been to stress the development of "innovative and asymmetric" capabilities that do not match China's forces but instead target specific elements to maximize deterrence. Despite continued budgetary pressures and the more recent challenge of building an all-volunteer force, this strategy has had bi-partisan support in Taiwan. Perhaps the highest-profile program has been Taiwan's development of "offensive" cruise and ballistic missiles that can more efficiently deter China than can expensive programs like missile defense. Taipei's top procurement priority is to gather technology necessary to build a new class of 1,500 ton submarines. Taipei is also signaling that it would like to purchase the 5th Generation F-35 to eventually replace its 4th Generation F-16s purchased in the early 1990s.

Consolidating Control of the South China Sea

China's decades long effort to establish and then consolidate control over the South China Sea is also motivated in large part by strategic goals. Perhaps the most important strategic goal for China in the South China Sea is to consolidate control over the area within its Nine/Ten Dash Line to ensure that Hainan Island becomes a growing base for global military and space power projection. In the last decade the PLA has built a major new naval base in the Sanya/Yalong Bay area to maintain a future squadron of SSBNs and SSNs and a future aircraft carrier and amphibious assault group. The SSBNs based at Sanya will likely comprise half of the PLA's undersea nuclear missile force, and the carrier-amphibious group will be responsible for projecting power in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and to Africa. In about two to three years, China will also complete a new space launch center at Wencheng on the Eastern Coast of Hainan, which will be responsible for heavy space launch vehicles. China's future space station, space shuttles, and manned Moon missions of the 2020s will be launched from Wencheng.

China's gradual constriction of the South China Sea has included its taking the Paracel Islands from South Vietnam in 1974, its grabbing reefs in the Spratly Island Group from Vietnam in 1988, and its stealthy occupation of Mischief Reef in late 1994 to early 1995. China now has a useful air and naval base on Woody Island in the Paracel Group, and has built facilities on seven shoals and reefs in the Spratly Group. Periods of aggression have been modulated by periods when Beijing appeared to favor negotiation, but always on a bi-lateral basis to maximize gains, and always rejecting multilateral negotiations with the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Despite a decade of imploring by ASEAN members, Beijing refuses to sign a Code of Conduct which might impede its consolidation of control.

In June 2009 a then recently-retired PLA Army General, Zhang Li, gave a speech that provided a possible glimpse of China's plans for the South China Sea. He advocated a major buildup of paramilitary and naval ships for enforcing claims in the region—which is now happening. He also proposed a “Three Dimensional Reconnaissance Observation System” of land based radar, aircraft and undersea sensors to better monitor all traffic under, in and over the South China Sea. Finally he called for a new airbase to be built on Mischief Reef, which is 240km from the Philippines, but 1,145km to China's Hainan Island.

In 2012 and 2013, China decided to bear down on the weakest of its competitors, the Philippines. In April and May 2012 Beijing essentially used its paramilitary ships to stand down Manila in a confrontation over control of Scarborough Shoal, which is about 244km from the Philippines and about 900km from China's Hainan Island. China used its ships to deny Philippine ships access to the shoal, which is often used by small fishing vessels as a shelter from poor weather.

Also in 2012 and 2013 China has targeted for harassment a Philippine Navy landing ship, *BRP Sierra Madre*, beached on Second Thomas Shoal in 1999 and used as an outpost manned by Philippine Navy and Marine personnel, about 40km from Chinese-garrisoned Mischief Reef. In July 2012 the PLA Navy briefly beached a frigate on Half Moon Shoal. In August 2012 Philippine military officials on Palawan Island told the author that this beaching was likely in reaction to Philippine interest in exploring for petroleum in this area. But may also have been exercise in pulling a ship off of a reef, as Second Thomas Shoal was only 100km to the North. It appears that through the Summer of 2013 Chinese Coast Guard ships have maintained a vigil at Second Thomas Shoal, seeking to intimidate the Philippines from keeping personnel on the *BRP Sierra Madre*. Should the Philippine military personnel abandon this ship, it is likely that China will drag it off Second Thomas Shoal or destroy it.

What is disturbing is that China's increasing assertiveness against Manila has come at a time when Philippine-U.S. military relations are experiencing a revival from the depths of the early 1990s, following the U.S. departure from Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base. The last decade has seen a steady increase in U.S. military engagement with Manila, to include counter-insurgency assistance and increasing conventional military training via regular exercises. In early October 2013, had President Barack Obama visited the Philippine as planned, there may have been an agreement which would allow for U.S. forces to again have “rotational”, vice permanent, access to Philippine bases. Having largely ignored its needs since the 1980s, Philippine President Benigno Aquino is leading the re-equipment of the Philippine Air Force and Navy for

external defense. While the U.S. has so far given Manila two former U.S. Coast Guard frigates, Manila may buy more modern combat ships and small F/A-50 trainer-fighters from South Korea.

As remaining Communist Party-led regimes, Vietnam and China have significant shared interests, but their historic enmity, and more recent conflict in the South China Sea significantly colors their relations. In short, Vietnam also opposes China's effort to assert control over the South China Sea, but in contrast to the Philippines, it is devoting significant resources to building up its South China Sea outposts and its military forces. Later this year the Vietnamese Navy may take delivery of the first of six Russian-built *Kilo* class submarines. Vietnam is on its way to acquiring 44 Russian Su-30 and Su-27 4th Generation fighters, Russian S-300 4th Gen surface-to-air missiles, and Novator *Club* anti-ship missiles.

Building For Power Projection

As stressed in this testimony, one of the key reasons that China is pressing for territorial gains in the East China Sea and South China Sea, and remains focused on conquering Taiwan, is that China's leadership seeks to surmount maritime barriers to its projection of global military power. In late 2004 the CCP began to describe "New Historic Missions" for the PLA, one of which was to increasingly defend the Party's growing international interests. This has included greatly increased participation in United Nations' peacekeeping missions, and the dispatch since December 2008 of 14 naval groups for anti-piracy patrols off of Somalia. This, and an increasing program of naval diplomacy, has seen the PLA Navy establish the beginning of a periodic, if much wider, near-global presence which so far has been largely benign. Even the United States is starting to include China in parts of its large bi-annual RIMPAC exercises.

However, China's goals are not always in concert with the West. As the Libyan Civil War was gathering in 2011, China contemplated sending large quantities of arms to the embattled Muammar Gaddafi. Had the Syrian crisis of September 2013 lasted longer, China may have had the opportunity to send one of its largest ships, a Type 071 LPD, to join Russian forces in tilting against the U.S. and Europe. As China accumulates the means for naval and air projection, it may become more active in defending its radical or authoritarian allied regimes, such as North Korea, Pakistan, Iran, Cuba and perhaps Venezuela.

Today, China fully supports Argentina's claims to the Falklands Islands and is now discussing co-production in Argentina of China's FC-1 fighter, which can be armed with the hypersonic speed CM400AKG anti-ship missile. If conflict were to erupt anew in the next decade, would China send naval forces to support Argentina and counter Britain's expected Navy and Marine deployments?

To project direct military assistance, by the late 2020s the PLA Navy could have a force of four to five aircraft carrier battle groups and up to 12 large amphibious transport-assault ships. China will likely equip its carriers with 5th Gen fighters, capable UCAVs, and may have a short take-off fighter for its LHDs. These battle groups will also include modern escort ships and logistic support ships. By the late 2020s the PLA Air Force could have significant numbers of Y-20 transports and will likely have developed a larger "C-5" size air transport. These will be able to carry light and medium weight mechanized units to distant exercise or battle fields.

Into the 2020s the PLA will also deploy more offensive strategic nuclear missiles and a new missile defense system. The large DF-41 ten-warhead road mobile intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) is near deployment. The PLA will also deploy layers of tactical, regional and strategic missile defenses, which when added to China's current estimated 5,000km Underground Great Wall of missile basing and storage facilities, will greatly challenge U.S. nuclear deterrence calculations. By the 2020s the PLA will control a large dual-use space station, a dual-use space shuttle, and very likely have a dual-use Moon Base -- all in order to expand China's ability to deny and control access to outer space.

Conclusion

Again, while the Obama Administration has earned deserved praise for its Rebalance to Asia "pivot" policy, a new momentum set in 2011 and 2012 of improving and tightening Asian alliance relations could be undermined by the fiscal uncertainty that may prevent the U.S. from preserving and building upon its position in Asia. In addition to the conspicuous absence of President Obama from an important Asian diplomatic schedule in early October, the Department of Defense has had to cut back on important bi-lateral and multilateral exercise activity with Asian partners in 2013. Adding to uncertainty are suggestions from the Department of Defense that sequestration may force a reduction to 8 U.S. Navy carrier battle groups and the elimination of whole types of aircraft from the U.S. Air Force, including the A-10 ground support fighter and the KC-10 aerial tanker. In addition, there are new doubts about whether the U.S. can afford critical future developments such as an effective UCAV, or a new nuclear attack submarine missile module extension, both for the U.S. Navy.

In 2010 the Administration learned the hard way that it had to stand up to China's pressure and did so on the Korean Peninsula and in Southeast Asia. But it also became clear that new military strategies and capabilities must be pursued to counter quickly-emerging Chinese A2AD capabilities. If Washington is to sustain a leadership role in deterring pressure now, and perhaps aggression later from China, it must demonstrate that determination by regularly identifying Chinese threatening behavior, be it the East China Sea, Taiwan Strait and South China Sea. It must be stated that China's behavior is increasing the chances for military incidents and that the U.S. will defend its allies if they are attacked. Washington must also back that determination by leading an Asian military coalition with modern U.S. forces at its core.

This is simply not the time for the United States to be considering additional reductions in its nuclear forces or in its principle power projection capabilities. Instead the U.S. should reintroduce secure tactical nuclear weapons on its submarines. It is essential that the U.S. join with Japan and others to build an Asian regional ISR network that provides all partners with a far better real-time picture of Chinese military activities. It is also critical that the U.S. develop new classes of missiles, from short- to intermediate-range, to target Chinese Naval forces as a means of deterring aggression. Many of these missiles should be offered to allies facing Chinese pressure, like Japan and the Philippines. It is also critical to help Taiwan build new asymmetric military capabilities that can target PLA invasion forces and have a better chance of sustaining deterrence on the Taiwan Strait.